

## АКТУАЛЬНІ ПРОБЛЕМИ ТЕОРІЇ ЛІТЕРАТУРИ ТА ЛІТЕРАТУРНОЇ КРИТИКИ

УДК 82-313.2

DOI: 10.32342/2523-4463-2021-2-22-1

**A. ANISTRATENKO,**

*Doctor of Science in Philology*

*Professor of the Department of Social Sciences and Ukrainian Studies*

*Bukovinian State Medical University (Chernivtsi)*

### SUBGENRES OF THE ALTERNATIVE HISTORY NOVEL: POETICS AND GENEALOGY

У статті розглянуто основні характеристики субжанрів альтернативної історії, її стиль, метажанрові маркери та спільні характеристики сюжету. Метажанр альтернативної історії (AI) подано тут як базове генологічне утворення, що творить власні субжанри з подібними та відмінними маркерами. Метою статті є визначення того, яким чином особливі генологічні комплекси та стилістичні маркери, що утворюють AI, ідентифікуються як субжанри метажанру альтернативної історії у вимірах української та зарубіжних літератур. Для подання субжанрових класифікацій AI використовуються методи опису; для їх аналізу та поділу, класифікаційного удосконалення гендерно-стилістичних елементів субжанрів AI залучено порівняльний метод та аналітичний принцип. Можна зробити висновок, що сама метажанрова формація AI була поділена на окремі субжанри та різновиди з плином часу і прийняла різні схеми реалізації від інших жанрів, зокрема канонічних, таких як історичний роман, фантастичний роман, детектив, хроніка та фентезі-сага. Альтернативна історія стала невідкладною допомогою для відновлення вкрай необхідного міфу в Європі з наявної міфологеми культурної єдності. Альтернативна історія та її множинні історії намагаються подолати десакралізацію, характерну для постмодернізму, і зробити кожен європейський компонент історичного світогляду альтернативним. В американській літературі альтернативна історія відіграє роль відновлення тягlosti національної історії та створення бачення майбутнього як історичного проекту.

*Ключові слова: метажанр альтернативної історії, гендерні маркери, піджанрова класифікація, українська література, американська література, європейська література.*

В статье рассмотрены основные характеристики субжанров альтернативной истории, их стиль, метажанровые маркеры и общие характеристики сюжета. Метажанр альтернативной истории (AI) представлен здесь как базовое генологическое образование, создающее собственные субжанры с подобными и отличительными маркерами. Целью статьи является определение того, как особые генологические комплексы и стилистические маркеры, образующие AI, идентифицируются как субжанры метажанра альтернативной истории в измерениях украинской и зарубежных литератур. Для представления субжанровых классификаций AI используются методы описания; для их анализа и разделения, классификационного усовершенствования гендерно-стилистических элементов субжанров AI привлечены сравнительный метод и аналитический принцип. Можно заключить, что сама метажанровая формація AI была разделена на отдельные субжанры и разновидности с течением времени и переняла различные схемы реализации от других жанров, в частности канонических, таких как исторический роман, фантастический роман, детектив, хроника и фэнтези-сага. Альтернативная история стала безотлагательной помощью для восстановления крайне необходимого мифа в Европе из существующей мифологеми культурного единства. Альтернативная история и ее множественные истории пытаются преодолеть десакрализацию, характерную для постмодернизма, и сде-

ать каждый европейский компонент исторического мировоззрения альтернативным. В американской литературе альтернативная история играет роль восстановления протяжности национальной истории и создания видения будущего как исторического проекта.

*Ключевые слова: метажанр альтернативной истории, гендерные маркеры, поджанровая классификация, украинская литература, американская литература, европейская литература.*

**I**ntroduction. The alternative history (AH) concept as a phenomenon of the literary process in the Ukrainian literature is outlined in the field of neo and postmodernism, therefore it is connected with the 1970s–1990s and the first decade of the 21st century. Examples of AH works have been known as phenomena since the beginning of the 20th century. They were published both in Ukraine and in emigration (for example, V. Vynnychenko’s “The Solar Machine”, 1920, M. Tchaikovsky’s “For the Power of the Sun”, 1918). In historical science and fiction, the desire of an individual to change something in history to turn it back to the right track is ever more frequently realized. First, the writers figured out that by understanding the logic of events – especially at a certain chronotopic distance – one can successfully create new alternatives, layering them on the already known course of historical events in the past epochs. With the help of this method, it is possible to particularly well reconstruct the national history. The first attempt at this was made in 1889 in the American literature.

The historical gaps and periods that interested foreign writers most were mainly those relating to the wars and breakthroughs of the century, as well as to the history of Christianity. On the other hand, AH works in the Ukrainian fiction relate primarily to the national history (often political one) and either to the times of Kyiv Rus and Christianization of Ukrainian lands (I. Bilyk’s “The Sword of Ares”, “The Funeral of the Gods”, “Do not Tease the Griffins”, V. Vladko’s “The Descendants of the Scythians”), or to the 19th – early 20th century (O. Irvanets’ “Rivne-Rovno”, Ya. Yanovskiy’s “The Valley of Belvedere”, Yu. Shcherbak’s “The Time of Deaths”, M. and S. Dyachenkos’ “Vita Nostra” and, of course, *the Defilyada* – the series of three novels by V. Kozhelyanko).

The aim of the article is to determine how the special gender complexes and stylistic markers that form the AH are identified as a subgenres of the alternative history meta-genre in Ukrainian and in American literature dimensions. To present AH subgenre classifications are used description methods; to analyze and divide them for the classification improvement of gender and stylistic elements of AH subgenres were involved the comparative method and the analytical principle as well.

The term *alternative history* (AH) describes the meta-genre of literature that is a combination of fictional and historical narratives and historiographic description of events, historical figures, preceding the fantasy story. These “allohistorical” narratives are presentational by their nature, the bottom line of them is “What will happen if?..”. Focused on reflection, AH may use collective memory properties. In some national literature, such as Ukrainian, Polish, for instance, it functions as a comment on current or past social and political circumstances.

The meta-genre of alternative history has three key aspects. They seem to determine the comparative level of the American and European literature samples within this genealogical formation. They are the following: firstly, the story is supposed to completely match the recorded historical and geographical events up until the bifurcation point. In other words, a classic alternative history cannot be based on crypto-history, hypothesis, fiction, however its background may be folklore or mythological heritage of the nation or the known ancient culture; secondly, the historical figures should play a leading role in the storyline events, especially in the political context; thirdly, the key storyline is expected to relate to the history of a certain human community or civilization on the planet Earth up to the bifurcation point.

If the author uses a storytelling method where there appears a parallel world or virtual reality, this world must be identical to the actual civilizational space up to the bifurcation point and, which is no less important, must it differ significantly after it is passed.

The ambivalence of this meta-genre (being on the edge between fiction and historical prose) is due to that its plot differs from that of science fiction and based on the matrix genre of the historical novel – as well as on the fantastic perspective.

One of the most important factors in the definition of AH is that the American literary studies approach the alternative history as a subgenre of science fiction, although they consider the

American literature the founder of this genealogical formation, while the European studies consider AH as a meta-genre. This is the reason why AH appears as a meta-genre in this study, because a meta-genre is versatile enough for comparative analysis of samples of various national literatures. If a peculiar formation in the world literature obtains the status of having fixed sub-formations, we can refer to it as a metaformation in a global sense. This is an amazing story of the genre's formation and its transformation as a meta-genre. It produces active sub-genres in the context of creating new samples, and, meanwhile, this formation exists provisionally and is rarely named in literary or critical works, as it is seldom indicated in annotations to fictional works. For example, the novel by O. Menshov "The Third Tertiary" is marked as one of the retro-detective story genre, V. Kozhelyanko's "Terorium" – as a political mock novel, A. Afanasiev's "The Last Warrior" – as an adventure novel, V. Vynnychenko's "The Solar Machine" is described as the greatest contribution to the Ukrainian science fiction in the 1920s and the largest and most complex science fiction work, although all of these works, with their specific genre palettes, based on the architectonic and fable formula, belong to the meta-genre of AH.

The special study on "The Concept and Current State of Alternative History" presents a more detailed diagram of AH transformations from a genre to a meta-genre. The role of the European myth was to spread the alternative historical method in the Humanities.

The genre of the historical novel works well for the alternative history. Alternatives that displaced the history appeared in the field of historicism. Emergence of the historical novel is connected with the revival of historical prose in the Middle Ages, the modification of the novelistic structure of the narrative and the transformation of historical literature as a classical prose tradition from a mythological parable to an epic genre, and more recently – as a canonized genre of the novel. The historical prose is an original genre of facts, scientism, and style combined and based on the principles of poetics. This suggestion was put forward by O. Abramovich and connected it with the historical basis of the novel's genesis. Due to establishment of the totalitarian regime in Europe and the common phenomenon of rewriting history in the 20th century, not only historical events of antiquity but also socio-political transformations witnessed by the single generation were reformatted in numerous sources. In novelistic prose, mythologems and numerous layers of stylization appear as mechanisms of alternation. The trend towards generalization determined the history's role of an intermediary between philosophy and religion: it was transformed as secular religion. Therefore, its relations with the church became ambiguous. History was replaced by the Divine Providence, as it was able to explain the course of things, but at the same time history continued to be associated with God (*unmittelbar zu Gott*), there has always been something sublime for rational historical reconstruction. Wilhelm von Humbolt compared history to arts, which includes not only imitation of an image, but also immersing oneself in an idea based on the form of the image.

Therefore, we can conclude that the meta-genre formation of AH spread over the course of a century impacting separate genres and varieties, and acquired various features of other genres, including canonical ones, such as the historical novel, adventure, detective novel, chronicle novel, and science fiction.

Thus, as the subgenre of "N genre + AH element", the path of AH starts in the Ukrainian literature, dating back to the 1920s. Meanwhile, in the American literature, the chronology is quite clear and associated with post-postmodernism. M. Schneider-Mayerson in his article "What almost happened..." [Schneider-Mayerson, 2009, p. 63–83] clearly indicates the year of emergence of the AH genre: "1995 can be considered the year of the birth of alternative history as a genre" [Schneider-Mayerson, 2009, p. 64]. Then M. Schneider-Mayerson explains such a clear dating of emergence of the genre with extra-literary reasons: "Despite the fact that hundreds of texts can be retroactively added to the list of alternative stories, the version of literary counter-facts that came into force in the early 1990s was not fully recognized as a genre until science fiction reviewers as Steven H. Silver, E. Lipper, and NASA scientist R.B. Schmunk established the literary award «Sidewise Awards for Alternate History» for achievements in writing works of alternative history in 1995" [Schneider-Mayerson, 2009, p. 64].

Though, frankly, E. Lipper and T. Shippey would not agree with M. Schneider-Mayerson. They wouldn't like to swap the alternative history into the literature shuttle that was launched with the writer award passing from the 20th to the 21st centuries. There is no doubt that the

genre's genesis started in the mid-twentieth century. Whatever features it might possess in the American literature, availability of a large set of works that attracted attention of publishers, readers, and literary critics is indicative of this. In his monograph "Hard reading: learning from science fiction" Shippey tries to combine the chronicle of the American literature science fiction with literary analysis [Shippey, 2016]. This would help the reader to successfully interpret works of science fiction. Speaking about the time when the AH appears in the American literature, Shippey says the following: "Still, what all this goes to show, I hope, is once again that sf is serious, even when it is being playful. These are all major issues, and it may be only the long prosperous afternoon of Western society post-1950 that has prevented them from becoming more contentious. The six essays after this one all in their different ways are connected to the same subject. The next two are on the issue of the cultural contest, the two after that deal with 'alternate history', and the last two look at a particular type of 'alternate history', the 'world where magic works', considering also the relationship between magic, religion, and science" [Shippey, 2016, p. 7], – T. Shippey offers an introduction to the classification of the alternative history in the American literature. So there we deal with the year 1950.

The difference in their subject/object orientation is the key obstacle to comparing these classifications. It is possible to overcome the difficulty though.

The classification of the American alternative history is based on the whirligig of the literary process. That is the main focus of the alternative subject-object orientation. The starting point is a certain work by some author and it is its characteristics that automatically serve as a model and the next template of the genre matrix. It is worth considering what kind of an author and work it is despite all the contrarities of the approach and its justification. Take "Citizen of the Galaxy" by P. Heinlein. He is known to be a brilliant writer and his work is extremely well-structured. He is famous for being not only "self-employed", but also effectively working for the literary time and genre. The role of "Citizen of the Galaxy" is multidimensional and not obvious: we face not just entertaining reading material or a humanistic mission to expand boundaries of readers' mindset. R. Heinlein builds up a non-linear spatial and temporal model of history for the reader, winning the reader's heart and darkening the mind at the same time, encouraging people to lose the sense of time-space, and later, in the next generations, the ability to see the forest for the trees, that is, by writing a story to see the history in its entirety: "Within the plot of Citizen of the Galaxy itself, this play has a very obvious function: it is an attempt by the dictatorial 'Grandmother', who runs the ship, to involve Thorby in her society's mythology and make it impossible for him to get away" [Shippey, 2016, p. 24].

So, the first aspect in the classification of the American AH covers prose works. They belong to the subculture of neomythologization of history in its broader sense of "history" (history in general) and the narrower meaning – "story" (narration of the work). One could mention "World of Difference" by G. Tarldava, D. Brin's "Thor Meets Captain America", G. Garrison's "A Transatlantic Tunnel, Hurrah!".

We should keep in mind that as an artistic device repeated mythologization does not work in AH compositions of this type. It works particularly as an idea and goal for implementation, which further becomes something more than an adventure story and will serve as a guide for the author and reader: "Heinlein is aware of all these falsities, and indeed uses the play to make them ironically clear. He is aware also of the tendency of most human societies to rewrite history in conformity with their current self-images" [Shippey, 2016, p. 27]. The images change over time, along with new political and social trends, so history is rewritten again. Such a critical alternative of the national or global history is considered in historical science as a historian's drawback, an attempt to intrude in the sacred truth and steady-as-a-rock facts. Nevertheless, in fiction, the drawback gives room to creative non-standard thinking and analysis, which allows us to reveal secrets of the actual history.

The next type of AH in the American literature, as described by T. Shippey, comes into view in the context of doubting progressive development of history. It is based on the theory of stair-stepping development of the history of mankind in general and the national history in particular. The author of the classification makes a connection between these views here and now, which is effective enough for creating AH samples. "The tension between the two views is seen in the rich history of works about time travelers who return to change the past. The most famous of

them are, perhaps «Lest Darkness Fall» by L. Sprague de Camp, 1941” [Shippey, 2016, p. 250]. T. Shippey also refers to M. Twain’s “A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s Court” as very similar to de Camp’s novel. It was written 52 years earlier and it belongs to the second category in the classification of AH works. Apart from the conclusion about a different functional role of the time travel method in works of alternative history, we also have a new update, much more distant from the one declared by M. Schneider-Mayerson in 1995, namely, 1889, the year M. Twain wrote the novel “A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s Court”. However, the novel by M. Twain was criticized due to its monoculturalism in the political worldview. Although all of these details are related to extraliterary factors. If we compare the invariant of the American AH, presented for the first time in the novel by M. Twain, we talk about cryptohistory in the Ukrainian and Western European literature. It is referred to in the monograph by T. Shippey as *pseudo-history* (‘Whig history’).

The next invariant of AH in the American literature is interpreted by T. Shippey as an “alternate universe”. It can be correlated with the European concept that is also characteristic of the Ukrainian AH, namely – *metahistory*. One can see an invariant in the alternative American fiction in the novel, written in 1951 by M.W. Wellman “Twice in Time” and in the first story by G. Kipling, “Eye of Allah”, which was reissued in 1926 in his collected works “Debits and Credits”. T. Shippey characterizes the AH invariant as “the tension between ‘desirability’ and ‘possibility’ is what all the stories are really about” [Shippey, 2016, p. 20]. He also called it metaphorically the “alternate universe”. The same phenomenon is referred to by T. Denisova as “The Traditional American Trend” in her brilliant “History of American literature of the 20th century”. She distinguishes it from the concepts and key sources of postmodernism, which was formed in the American culture of the next decade: “A new theme is being developed. It keeps pace with interests the of society and an individual. The search for new poetics is held not in the plane of postmodernism, but in the traditional American trends such as new journalism, history, quick news (gothic), a combination of sociality (factuality) and fictionality in the American dimension (fabulation)” [Denisova, 2012, p. 314]. There is no clear analog of the European and Ukrainian *political AH novel* in the American classification of AH, but “*fabulation*” actually takes the same place as a political utopia with an alternative historical structure of the plot in our literature.

Another invariant of AH in the American literature of the mid-20th century is an alternative “parallel world”. This variety includes a large range of texts, in particular, K. Dick’s “The Man in the High Castle” (1962), H. Harrison’s “A Transatlantic Tunnel, Hurrah!” (1972), W. Moore’s “Bring the Jubilee” (not translated into Ukrainian) (1953), R. Garrett’s, “Too Many Magicians” (1967). Shippey says “The point is, however, that all these stories also have their very potential to modern concepts of history, and are attractive to us at least partly because they show us how we might be too different if subjected to a different set of social pressures” [Shippey, 2016, p. 84]. In comparison to the classification of the Ukrainian and European AH literature, the American “*parallel world*” correlates with the *historical fantasy (historized fiction)*. This AH invariant is significantly different from description of the actual history and the alternative one after the bifurcation point. There are a lot of options for layering genres, plot construction, artistic media, and galleries of imagery in literature.

The last type of the American AH described in the “Hard reading...” monograph is associated with description in AH fiction of an individual’s role in the history of civilization. Thus, at the ideological and thematic levels, tension is caused by the opposition of individualization and randomness of historical events. T. Shippey sees “Foundation” by A. Asimov a perfect example of this type of AH: “Still, it must be obvious to everyone that the trilogy (as it was when this piece was first written) could not have been written without some sense of historical analogy, while for much of the time the stories do nothing but dramatize the subordination of the individual will to the ‘laws’ of sociohistory” [Shippey, 2016, p. 84]. In the Ukrainian and European literatures, alternative historiography resonates too, i. e. in German it is “Alternative Historik” – artistic and essayistic works aimed at solving the issue of relations between a historian and his/her subject. For instance, H. White’s “Metahistory”, Yu. Andrukhovich’s “Central-Eastern Revision”, etc. It is noteworthy that in the European literary the alternative historiography serves the writer primarily as a base for socio-philosophical analysis, although it is recorded as an AH subgenre. In the American literature it serves as the artistic method of retrospection: “Retrospection is not histo-



ry. It is a glimpse into the past. The past seems somewhat softened by the time distance, its angles are a little rounded..." [Denisova, 2012, p. 323]. It should be noted that AH writers use modeling as a method of distant analytical prediction and motivation of cause-and-effect relations of actual historical and cultural events, as well as plot lines of a work. Which does not apply to the retrospection that is often used by authors of historical novels.

The concept of a *sub-genre* balances on the verge of the content and form and is dialectically related to the term *meta-genre*. Depending on the latter's interpretation, the semantic content and semantic valence of the concept of *subgenre* may differ significantly.

Besides, the theoretical component of the narrower sense of the philosophical and philological terminological framework impacts further interpretation of concepts. Without a clear definition of the term, it will be difficult to combine the phenomena of the outer linguistic reality in the course of practical comparative analysis of the genre and stylistic characteristics of AH sub-genres.

Therefore, in modern literary studies, the genre is mostly associated with a formal phenomenon. This is established in many theoretical and literary works, in particular, those by: H. Bloom, M. Bakhtin, D. Zatonsky, D. Nalyvaiko, M. Bradbury, etc. "The form is always justified by something. In the ontological meaning, the form is not entitled to the status of something sustainable. Although, it is determined by the logical chain that unites the design and creation of true integrity, an objective/subjective symbolic monade. Its aim is our minds and our response" [Chervinska, 2015, p. 7]. So, we see that the genre and forms are related concepts. Their content and logic have to comply with terms of the content plane. In practical discourse, the *meta-genre*, *genre* and *subgenre* will balance on the verge of the content and form, being «viewers» within the quantum theory of the microworld.

The *meta-genre* in literary studies has a huge semantic set of meanings. Authors like O. Burlina, Yu. Podlubnova, B. Ivaniuk consider meta-genre as a sort of extra derivations. It is approximated to the method and way of artistic expression of an object's fictional comprehension and reproduction. It is not a consolidated sub-genre formation though. It should be mentioned that the general direction of theoretical studies relating to the issue of the meta-genre is based on its interpretation by M. Bahtin. He outlines the meta-genre as an established set of specific means of artistic modeling of the world. Consequently, "the meta-genre blurs the traditional understanding of the genre, and falls under a different system of theoretical understanding" [Raritskyi, 2016, p. 26], as pointed out in the monograph "Scores of Text and Spirit" by O. Raritskyi. Partly agreeing with this interpretation, we should pay attention to the pragmatic aspect of differentiating the genre and meta-genre. This issue is covered in the «Lexicon of General and Comparative Literature»: "The meta-genre is a popular genre characteristic that determines the typological similarity of various genre forms" [Volkov, 2001, p. 322]. The concept of *meta-genre* is used in modern literary studies when it comes to a large variety of fiction. They are known to create their own genre modifications which later become independent genres.

O. Stuzhuk, the author of one of the first Ukrainian science fiction studies, outlines that it is fair to emphasize development of genre modifications by the meta-genre formation. "Meta-genre is a peculiar system of genres with several characteristic features" [Stuzhuk, 2006, p. 5]. The term *meta-genre* is used in the suggested study exactly in this very narrow meaning.

It is worth noting that due to the rapid expansion of the corpus of novelistic prose works in the late 20th early 21st century, there was a practical need to label new samples. They did not fit into existing theoretical scheme of types and the genre subdivision of creative works of that time. That is why concepts such as "intermediate genres", "subgenres", "overgenres", "undergenre" emerged. They were difficult to include into a certain hierarchy. Since the concept of the meta-genre appeared, the hierarchy was set as follows: meta-genre, genre, sub-genre (from more general to more specific ones).

The definition of the genre by N. Bernadska can serve as the basic one. "The genre is an artistic concept as a whole. Where features that are dominant (a set of features that cover different levels of the work – from compositional to linguistic ones) and variable (a system of flexible and changeful elements of the structure) interact. When the artistic genre is a set of dominant (i.e., level) and variable (i.e., changing) features, they are known to create a *genre matrix*, structuring their connections as a certain clear sequence – a structure. The genre changes into a *sub-*

*genre* if the total number and quality of dominant features of the work decreases and the influence of variable ones increases. A subgenre is a genealogical formation that arose through transformation or modification of the genre" [Bernadska, 2004, p. 26].

Overall, it could be said that a **meta-genre** is a super-genre genealogical formation. It develops based on several genre matrices of source genres. The meta-genre actively produces literary samples and serves as a base for sub-genre branches.

In the second decade of the 21st century, each of the AH subgenres can function as a full-fledged genre. However it turns out that it is more practical to choose the scheme of "**N genre + AH element**" in applied discourse, taking into account dynamism of the plot, valence of genealogical schemes, and specific artistic media used by the writer to implicate the ideological and thematic plan. On the other hand, a combined genre requires a lot of the writer's attention and skill for him/her to create a well-structured text, an edited structure of the novel and bright genre images and characters. For example, to implement the combined genre in the novel "The Third Tertiary" (a retro detective AH novel), O. Menshov had to introduce a separate epistolary publicistic superstructure with a large list of characters, to implicate the reader as one of the characters of the specified separate storyline, and measure out the text of the key detective storyline to fit in the approximately the same text volume. This requires the writer's cultural experience and excellent writing skills. Especially when historical canvas of the novel's superstructure is not thematically related to the basic plot framework.

Polish writer Ya. Dukai used the approach mentioned above too. He resolved it by means of creative details and ultimate combination of detective, historical, adventure, and fantasy genres as a single receptive unit at the expense of the descriptive design expressed at the textual level. The volume of the novel is over 1,200 pages.

Implementation of the **N genre + AH element** formula goes beyond fiction limits. On the other hand, the modern novel also goes beyond the artistic means of prose and is partially competing with its opponents: fiction and journalism.

Historical fantasy usually contains a deep ideological and thematic connection with literary travels. These may be absolutely different modes of travel in a particular practical aspect of expression in the novel: time travel, space travel, forced travel, escape, military travel, etc. The modus of the travel and the content of this concept are important. I. Kropyvko, a researcher into the Ukrainian and Polish literature of postmodernism, presents the modern literary concept of literature travels as follows: "A postmodern character who travels instead of undertaking an educational focused search for abstract truths and his essence [...] establishes communication with others, i. e. the people and events he encounters during the journey – and so the reader does [...]" [Kropyvko, 2019, p. 196]. We can observe the birth of a receptive alternative option based on the dialogue using the internal language of travel literature in the modern world. A travel into the inner world of a character is compared with spatial or temporal characteristics of the character's travel.

It makes sense to refer to receptive standards of intertext and metatext perception when considering historical fantasy from the immanent travel point of view. A topological or chronological journey in prose is an essential attribute of the specified subgenres. So, "when creating a certain text, the writer models the image of the reader as his «alter ego». Such a «perfect reader» is able to recognize the meanings encoded in the work" [Skoryna, 2019, p. 99]. To ensure receptive success, the writer makes some efforts: he implements historical insights in the text, cognitive inserts, postcards, letters, newspaper clippings, and other elements aimed at engaging the reader into the cultural and historical continuity of the work or its parts.

One of the most interesting literary versions is the subgenre of **alternative historiography**. In historical science, alternative historiography is recognized as "false history", which is not worth the attention of the present civilized scientific world. However, in fiction, the subgenre has its special objective: to analyze the national history by modeling alternative «branches» of its development. Alternative historiography sometimes includes a body of historical texts. Due to interpretation of historical facts and the role of famous figures in the national history they are known to form the basis for ideological pressure on certain population categories or creation of social myths designed to control areas of public life that are still not under control of the current authorities. Manipulative texts, as well as information and educational resources, are not con-

sidered in the study. In the Ukrainian literature, a good example of alternative historiography is the book by D. Shurkhalo "The Ukrainian What-If-ology", and the work by H. White "Metahistory" is a good example in the American literature.

The historiographical way of presenting the material is the key feature of this subgenre, whereas the genre feature is the active formula of AH and introduction of new "historical" characters.

The last interesting AH subgenre is the **political utopia (political fiction)** novel. It became widespread in the literature of Western Europe and the former Soviet Union and Slavic countries. The subgenre refers to a wide variety of novels and short prose, the alternative history in which relates to a political system, public policy, or national political history. A good example in the Russian literature is "The Collapse of the Itl Republic" by B. Lavrenyov. A good example in the British literature is "Stalky & Co" by R. Kipling. Thus, works of the political utopia subgenre are characterized by architectonic modeling based on the saga principle. On the artistic level of the fables, they tend to be written as chronicle narratives. On the linguistic and symbolic levels, they often appeal to historical epochs of monarchies and historical figures of heroic epics, which are associated with mythologems and folklore concepts.

The focus of the study is the Ukrainian features of postmodernism, which defined the "cover" of the postpostmodern literature, vs. classical post-modern phenomena of a game, replacing chronotopic coordinates, quotes of classical and modernist writers without quotation marks, intermediality and intertextuality, the tendency to create metatext, local genre modifications.

Remythologization of European mythologies, the issue of the "internal" and "external" myths, their reception and interpretation – all these are aspects related to features of the poetics of the creative alternative history, and they are included into the research structure on the local basis.

One of important features of comparative studies is their ambivalence towards the history of literature and the literary theory. This conditioned the need to introduce the key principle and methodological basis of the suggested study. Therefore, the comparison is based on three key points: the Ukrainian literature and AH in it, the "source" American literature and AH in it at the current stage, and the Western European dimension of AH as the "imaginary third" one. This was how the genre formula and the general idea of alternative history were transmitted from the American to Ukrainian literature. Therefore, we can also emphasize the system variety of comparative analysis in the study.

Consequently, there is the logical dilemma of the uniqueness and multiplicity of the phenomena of the individual and national pictures of the world. The issue of the primary or secondary factors in formation of cultural values arises again. Thus, Romanian researcher G. Boangiu differentiates components of the of "friend or foe" meanings (or "I – the Other") separately for the generation that emerged in the 20th century. The algorithm of outlook formation was based on a collective ideology, which formed the national consciousness. The framework for an individual philosophy was created, and nowadays, in the first decades of the 21st century, the process is reversed and directed from the periphery to the center, from the individual to the general.

Approaching the Ukrainian mentality theoretically, G. Boangiu suggests an almost perfect transparent mechanism for restructuring the content of the concepts. Well-known comparatist H. Syvachenko also draws attention to these important aspects in her work "The Prophet of the Foreign Fatherland". This is a change in the way and essence of literature's interaction with society, of the writer with the reader, the subjective vision with objective reality. "In the new information and socio-geopolitical situation, writers, as well as humanity as a whole, are increasingly beginning to realize the degree of their theoretical independence from history and space" [Syvachenko, 2003, p. 9].

The distance of the modern ideology subject/carrier and their historical and topographic context of the postpostmodern age implies expansion of the alternative discourse in general and in the AH literature in particular. Which doesn't apply to the opposition influenced by the totalitarian narrative, except for the obvious changes in the dominant models of development of the global situation in general. When comparing the alternative models in the fiction of various national literatures, we may come to conclusions about the identity, similarity, or difference; general, special or unique, universal, areal, and local, international or national, in AH samples in the diachronic section. We also discover genealogical and functional schemes of artistic alternatives.



A wide range of national literature materials from Ukraine, Russia, Poland, the Czech Republic, Germany, Sweden, Great Britain, Spain, and the USA makes it possible to identify the boundaries of alternative history in fiction and to take into account all individual national components of poetics and genealogy. A comparative analysis of AH functioning systems will highlight common functional and artistic features of the meta-genre. The practical value of findings of a systematic comparison of the creative AH within a national literature, a writer, or samples of artistic works increases significantly when the observations are synchronized and systematized.

In the modern European prose, writers create their works within adjacent genre and stylistic formations. This includes J. Mayard, Ch. Falkenland, S. Fry, T. Vermes, Ya. Dukai, T. Dückers, K. Thomas, M. Görizt, T. Hulswitt, etc. In the former Soviet and Russian school of fantasy some works by famous historical fiction authors include: V. Aksionov ("The Island of Crimea"), A. Afanasiev ("The Last Warrior"), V. Pelevin ("Generation 'П'/P"), V. Sorokin ("The Sugary Kremlin"), V. Yerofeev ("The Encyclopedia of the Russian soul"), etc.

Works by Ukrainian authors include those by Yu. Andrukhovich, O. Berdnyk, O. Irvanets, V. Kozhelyanko, Ya. Lyzhnyk, O. Menshov, V. Tarnavskiy, Yu. Scherbak, Ya. Yanovskiy.

From among the **best examples** of the **AH genre**, most works represent different options of the countries' development stemming from the outcome of the world wars. For example, S. Anisimov's novel "Variant BIS", and by T. Vermes' "Look Who's Back". S. Anisimov's novel describes a course of events that could have occurred if the allies had fought together with Germany against the USSR. In novel by A. Lazarchuk "Who is able to hold a weapon..." we observe an alternative course of the history of Europe in the 20th century in case Germany had won World War II. There is also possible to include here the *Defilade* trilogy by V. Kozhelyanko: "The Defilade in Moscow", "Konotop", "The Man's Zoo of the Lord", published in 2007 under one cover.

**Pseudoalternative history (pseudo-history)** is a type of alternative history that arose as a result of activities or influence of the so-called *progressors*, such as P. Anderson, who wrote "What would happen if..." (Paul William Anderson's "Delenda Est"), the character of the story by L.S. de Camp "Lest Darkness Fall", "The Andriiv Brotherhood" by V. Zvyagintsev, etc.), or of any *transferred* artifacts, structures, groups of people, or even entire populated regions of the future. Pseudo-history works can be referred to as *historicized fiction*. The author imposes his/her piece of fantasy on the genre matrix of the historical novel (in the Ukrainian literature, for example, it is "False Nostradamus" by V. Kozhelyanko, R.S. Katz's "The History of Soviet Fiction"). Some dates may be mentioned there (even fantastic ones, like *October 32, 1991*), events, famous historical figures, but they may play roles that are not typical of them.

At the beginning of the third decade of the 2000s, alternative history is already functioning as a meta-genre in the European national literature. The genre matrix of the historical novel can be transformed as fantasy, detective, adventure genealogical varieties. This allows the writer to create samples of new subgenres that would provide the artistic arsenal required to implement the ideological and thematic content.

**Uchronia** is a subgenre of AH where the action takes place in a known chronotope but outside of the time context. The temporal segment may appear after the bifurcation point. The term *uchronia* is an analogy to the well-known term *utopia*, where *topos* are replaced with *chronos*. A book of the same name was written by Charles Renouvier in 1876. As its full title implies, this book is "an apocryphal sketch of the development of European civilization, not as it was, but as it could have been" [Renouvier, 1876]. The concept of local value is mentioned in the novel. It would later be used in literary criticism in the meaning of a fantasy subgenre in the United States literature, and in the European writing its meaning was rather that of a subgenre within the AH meta-genre.

Functioning of alternative history subgenres is rather heterogeneous in the discourse of the meta-genre and interaction of post-genre cultural factors of the modern novel. For example, logical, genealogical intersections and superstructures of poetics create secondary connections between literary phenomena and cultural cross-sections of real-time. The cultural aesthetic of the urban novel fits well into the framework of an alternative historical detective story. It partly contains the characteristics of a political novel. Such interweaving happens not only in ekphrastic romance. Following D. Zatonskyi, T. Bovsunivska considers the political novel as a genre variety in her popular monograph "Genre Modifications of the Modern Novel". She does not consider it

as a thematic segment, however, she develops this idea with the statement: “The political novel is characterized by the feature where artistic and political types of communication exists in the novel. This is an important factor for the further genre formation” [Bovsunivska, 2015, p. 282]. The “further genre formation” provides for updating genre schemes, consolidating cultural and historical context to create a worldview basis for the novel and a unique model of the piece of art poetics. The researcher sees this process as follows: “Communication, in this case, is understood as interaction of manifested consciousnesses. The communication through the text of a political novel is systematic creation of a conscious verbal behavior of the author’s novel. It is aimed at interacting with the collective recipient (and building a certain model of the world in its cognitive system) to transmit personal or collective meanings and exert an aesthetic and political influence on it” [Bovsunivska, 2015, p. 282]. Consequently, the communication goal “leads” all levels of the work of art. The authors mainly use the journalistic, reportage style at the linguistic and stylistic levels. Slang words are used in the language of the work. Incomplete sentences and appellative constructions are used at the syntactic level. At the symbolic level, political slogans may act as characters, and famous historical figures may act as symbols of the national collective choice. One can see a combined genre type at the geological level. The declared result of communication manifests itself at the ideological and thematic levels, exerting an aesthetic and political influence on the reader. This could give them additional information to think over certain historical and political events.

It should be pointed out that the qualification of AH subgenres within the meta-genre depends both on functional characteristics of each of the sub-genres, and on genealogical features of genre development. English literature studies tend to describe AH as a subsidiary genre of science fiction. As AH is included into the genre prose of popular literature (genre fiction), English literature qualifies alternative history as a subgenre. For example, this similar approach is used by T. Shippey in his work “Hard reading: learning from science fiction”. “The first thing I would like to say about alternative history, I believe [...] that this subgenre of science fiction, like most of them, if not all of them, is heavily restricted by the rules. It obeys a kind of grammar. Rule 1 for the alternate history is [...] to find a birufication point, a point where we split off the real history we know and the alternate history, which we are being introduced to. There are obvious regulations for this main rule [...]” [Shippey, 2016, p. 126]. Whereas the European literary studies and Ukrainian ones, in particular, apply the approach of considering AH based on “dividing it into subsidiary subgenres”, as S. Sobolev indicates in his “The Handbook for Chronohackers”, in terms of the content of the European literature, the both versions work well.

There are lots of controversies in the literary theory of today regarding perception of the genre. Understanding of the genre as basic elements of a piece of art in modern literary studies is perceived as an element of classical “outdated literary studies”. Since 2010, growing opposition of researchers in the English criticism has been observed. It is based on understanding of practical significance of the genre theory. Such confrontation can be described theoretically using the principle of socio-political groups, such as “ultraright-wing genre researchers” and “ultraleft-wing genre researchers”. So the “ultraright-wing” ones are absorbed in the concept of the “over-genre”, regardless of the thematic aspect of their research (this may be a work on aesthetics of popular literature or a historical and literary analysis of works by a particular writer, or even comparative studies). The “ultraleft-wing” underestimate influence of the genre on the form and content of the modern novel. They introduce the style, the ideological and thematic balance, the contact of the author and the recipient, the artistic context, etc. One of the “ultraright-wing” ones is, for example, K. Gelder, who attributes the genre of fiction with a stronger literary intensifier. He divides literature into fiction (that is, mass literature) and “high literature” to his taste. The popular literature is completely determined by its genre, whereas intellectual literature, the literature of professional writing, does not need any genre labelling, according to the researcher. Though in each case it can be described and identified by the author’s going beyond the genre or any other limits. “This is just one way to note that Literature uses a set of logics and practices that differ in nature from those depicted in popular fiction” [Gelder, 2004, p. 11–12].

Following the English-speaking “ultraright-wing” literary scholars, Ukrainian researchers defend the superposition of the genre. For example, S. Filonenko in her “Mass Literature in Ukraine: discourse / gender / genre” monograph, follows K. Gelder’s theory and adopts it in her

analysis of the theoretical base of the Ukrainian mass prose, focusing on the genealogical aspect of fiction. As S. Filonenko claims, it is a genre that contains complex discourse of the work and puts questions that make it clear “the answers will be dependent on the genre identification of a particular work” [Filonenko, 2011, p. 146]. Therefore, the genre is not just a frame of the work, but also an inescapable fate for the writer, as the literary critic points out, “the author always exists in a relationship with a certain genre” [Filonenko, 2011, p. 146].

At the same time, “ultraleft-wing genre researchers” promote the actual role of the genre in literary studies. It comes from understanding of the functional genre in linguistics. C. Miller’s theory focuses on the nature of genre as a social action as inherited in works by Ukrainian linguists from Kharkiv. “The genre is a rhetorical tool that plays the role of an intermediary between specific intentions and social necessity. It connects the personal with the social, the individual with the repetitive” [Korneiko, 2014, p. 40]. A creative genre acquires the same interpretation among literary critics who are engaged in literature of the post-postmodern era. These are

P. Kharchuk, S. Kyrlyuk, etc. The predominant influence of the social factor on formation and reinterpretation of modern novel genres is often perceived by post-postmodern literary critics as dominant, in particular in the Ukrainian literature. “From now on, the Ukrainian literature exists in a free society, where everyone can write and read what they like. Where mass genres are being developed [...] while the national context is modified as the context of mass literature. At the same time, Ukrainian writers remain active authors (such as neo-positivists, neomodernists). They strive to create ‘sophisticated’ literature. Among active writers, there are (postmodernists) who, appealing to mass genres, try to imply serious meaning in them” [Kharchuk, 2008, p. 233].

So, we are talking about the fact that it is quite difficult to distinguish between mass and “sophisticated” literature, especially when using the concept of a bestseller. Novels that fall under the fictional text scheme have mainly stylistic, rather than genre identification markers. The definition of fiction proves it. “In modern literary studies, fiction refers to a light, lively, entertaining, easy to understand story about an event or scientific problem, a well-known person, mainly designed for a naive recipient; it is considered a type of mass literature that uses narrative forms aimed for easy reading” [Kovaliv, 2007, vol. 1, p. 121].

We see that nowadays genealogical studies in Ukraine face the problem of lack of clear differentiation of the social vector of a literary work, especially when we speak about the modern novel. Introduction of the term “literary production” (that is semantically similar to the notion of “printed production”) into literary criticism attributes the discourse of literary studies to the past of the 20th century. When the so-called sophisticated literature was created based on the principle of “collection books”, and “«a graphic printed product”, in terms of poetics and stylistics it was approximately equal to “tabloid periodicals” intended only for one-time entertainment reading.

That is why we qualify AH as a meta-genre, and the political utopia, cryptohistory, allohistory, uchronia, metahistory, political fantasy novels – as AH subgenres.

**The political utopia or political fiction novel** introduces the genre matrix of historical and social prose and the style of the ironic novel. To combine quite diverse components, the authors use the utopia or dystopia method and scheme. The key elements of such works of social history are related to country building processes. They are usually about political becoming of existing countries and contain actual historical figures, but also a changed element (V. Kozhelyanko “Terorium”, B. Lavrenev “The Collapse of the ITL Republic”).

**Cryptohistory** is a subgenre of alternative history. In its genealogical formula, the actual story exists only theoretically, while the alternative history that forms the plot after the bifurcation point is based on unproven historical sources. It allows more freedom for the author’s imagination, where they may involve two or more bifurcation points. As previously mentioned, the second point of bifurcation would be based on an unreal story that is presented as a true one. Genre markers and plot schemes are identical to alternative history. Though the goal of reconstructing history disappears and is replaced by other goals: restoration of national and mental mindset elements (V. Kozhelyanko’s “Ethiopian Sich”), humanization of the society (Kir Bulychov “A Reserve for Academics”), psychologization and/or logical construction of the historical course (H. Garrison’s trilogy “West of Eden”, “Winter in Eden”, “Return to Eden”), and so on.

**A metahistorical work** is an alternative history with several alternatives implemented in a single text. The best example is the "Metahistory" by H. White, "The Ukrainian What-If-ology" by D. Shurkhalo.

**Alternative fiction (historical fantasy)** is formed by layering of the alternative history genre on a fantasy genre piece. A bright example is "Thor meets Captain America" by D. Brin. Some adventure works can be included here where they meet the formula **N genre + AH element**. The background of action in the works is formed by certain historical events (if they are clearly described by the author, or they are given a specific indication), and the nature of characters, cause-and-effect relations of the characters' actions are intrinsic to a certain actual historical period. We could mention the novel "The Third Field" by V. Kozhelyanko in this context.

So, having analyzed functioning of alternative history subgenres within the meta-genre (for the European literature) and the place of AH as a fantasy subgenre (for the American prose), we see an extensive network of markers of poetics and genealogical features of this intermediate, global phenomenon of fiction. Over time, from the 20th through the 21st century, AH has acquired in different national literatures its own unique genealogical matrices, plot schemes, palettes of artistic means, and historical periods that fall under the scope of the writers' attention. Therefore, the most productive and interesting in comparative terms is an attempt to not distinguish specific features of the Ukrainian AH against the background of foreign writings, but to collect a complete map of artistic alternatives, where our Ukrainian alternative historical prose is marked in blue and yellow, the colors of the Ukrainian flag.

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## SUBGENRES OF THE ALTERNATIVE HISTORY NOVEL: POETICS AND GENEALOGY

Antonina V. Anistratenko, Bukovinian State Medical University (Ukraine).

e-mail: oirak@bsmu.edu.ua

DOI: 10.32342/2523-4463-2021-2-22-1

**Key words:** *alternative history meta-genre, gender markers, subgenre classification, Ukrainian literature, American literature, European literature.*

The article deals with the basic characteristics of the alternative history subgenres, its style, meta-genre markers, and common plot characteristics. The meta-genre of alternative history (AH) is presented here as the basic gender formation that derives its own subgenres with similar and different markers. *The aim of the article* is to determine how the special gender complexes and stylistic markers that form the AH are identified as subgenres of the alternative history meta-genre in Ukrainian and in American literature dimensions. To present AH subgenre classifications description *methods* are used; to analyze and divide them for the classification improvement of gender and stylistic elements of AH subgenres the comparative method and the analytical principle were involved. It could be concluded that the AH meta-genre formation itself has been separated into individual sub-genres and varieties over time and has accepted different fable schemes from the other genres, particularly the canonical ones, such as historical novel, fiction novel, detective novel, uchronic and fantasy. Alternative history has become emergency aid for the restoration of a much-needed myth in Europe. Alternative history and its histories try to overcome this sacralization and make each European component an alternative one. In American literature, alternative history plays the role of rebuilding national history and making future visions.

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Одержано 6.08.2021.